

46 Dec.-'47

Route To:

INTERNATIONAL CITY MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION
1313 EAST 60TH STREET - CHICAGO 37, ILLINOIS

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PREPARING THE AGENDA FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS

How is the agenda for council meetings prepared, what is the content of the agenda, and how is it used?

There is no uniform practice with regard to the method of preparing the agenda. Some cities put on the calendar only items that come up for final action and other cities list all matters to be considered. Custom and what the council desires should to some extent determine the practice in a given city. In the smaller cities the items of business which come before the council meeting rarely exceed 10 or 15 in number, and a list of such matters, including items for first, second, and third readings, meets the need for a calendar. In large cities that operate under the mayor-council plan or that have large councils an elaborate form of agenda or calendar may be preferred. The clerk in such cities customarily prepares a complete list of matters that have been officially set for hearing at the next council meeting. The clerk often lists on the calendar the status of all ordinances pending before the council.

Preparing the Agenda. A detailed agenda informs the council as well as departmental officials when a particular matter is to be brought up. Failure to list scheduled action may cause many unnecessary telephone calls and personal visits to the clerk's office. Practice under the council-manager plan differs from that in cities under other forms because all matters relating to administration, as well as recommendations on policy, reach the council through the manager. He must therefore be fully informed on all matters which are to come before the council meeting. But this does not mean that the city manager must prepare the agenda. (In noncouncil-manager cities the mayor or city clerk generally keeps the council informed.) The methods used may be listed as follows:

1. The city clerk uses a standard form in typing the agenda on the morning of the day the council meets. The manager reads all communications which are to go before the council prior to the meeting and looks over the ordinances and other routine matters that will come before the council.

2. The city manager or his office staff prepares the agenda. In some cities it is mailed or delivered to councilmen prior to the meeting, and may be accompanied by a brief report from the manager on the more important matters that will come up at the meeting.

3. The city clerk prepares part of the agenda--the part listing petitions, official papers, and requests of citizens--which are presented to the council by the clerk. The second part or balance of the agenda consists of reports which are prepared by the city manager or department heads and are submitted by the manager at the meeting. The clerk and the manager check with each other prior to the regular council meeting so that the manager will be informed of items listed by the clerk. In some cities the city manager sends his items to the city clerk for inclusion on the agenda.

4. In a few cities that do not have an agenda all matters on which reports are made are prepared by the manager's office or by department heads and sent to the manager's office prior to the meeting of the council. The manager then reads

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the communications to the council so that he can emphasize any points that need emphasis. In such cities the city clerk reads all petitions and communications from outside sources.

Informal Council Meetings. In most council-manager cities councilmen are informed of the chief items on the agenda at an informal session held prior to the regular council meeting. Some city managers prepare a special agenda for this informal meeting. Such an agenda lists all the subjects that the manager desires to discuss with the council. Items which councilmen or department heads desire to discuss at the informal meeting are placed on the agenda by calling the manager's office or by request made at the previous informal meeting. Such an agenda should indicate the subject to be discussed, the estimated time required, and the names of the participants.

General Suggestions. Some observations on the preparation and use of the agenda, based on the experience of many cities, may be stated briefly as follows:

1. The agenda should conform to the order of business as provided in the council rules and special orders. Generally the council rules should require advance filing with the clerk of matters to be acted upon finally. But the rules also should permit the introduction of new business even though not on the agenda. A simple majority should be sufficient to permit an ordinance or resolution to be introduced on the floor without notice, to receive reports, and so on.

2. It would seem desirable for the city manager and clerk to collaborate in preparing the agenda. A good practice is for the manager to submit to the city clerk the necessary data on new matters and reports and let the clerk make up the agenda. The clerk would add follow-up and routine actions, list matters on which final action has not been taken, and submit the complete agenda to the manager for review and approval.

3. The council and manager should determine whether the agenda should be delivered in advance of the meeting or handed to councilmen at the time of the meeting. In any event officials other than councilmen whose duties require them to be informed of matters coming before the meeting should receive the agenda or be informed of items of interest to them.

4. Insofar as possible, resolutions should be prepared in advance of the council meeting on all matters on which action can be foreseen in order to reduce the time spent on discussion and to make clear to the council the policy recommended by the manager. At the meeting the manager can submit new material and recommendations on policy, and the city clerk can submit petitions and other routine material.

5. It is generally not good practice for the city manager to discuss with individual councilmen items of business not yet considered by the council as a whole. Nor should the city manager or his department heads disclose to the press any recommendations which will be made to the council. Managers can answer questions of councilmen and talk over important matters with council committees in advance of the regular meetings. But it is important that the manager deal with the council as a whole and not show partiality or preference by giving one councilman more information than another.

6. There is a great deal to be said in favor of the practice of making available to councilmen in full only those communications that are of more than routine significance and the filing of those that are less important.

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PREVENTING ACCIDENTS IN MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT

Why should a city have a safety program, what is top management's responsibility for safe practices, and how can a municipality best set up and operate a safety program among employees?

Officials of both large and small cities are taking cognizance of the accident hazards which are going up with the renewal of construction work, the increase in the number of new employees, and the greater number of motor vehicles used by cities. Cincinnati municipal employees, for example, in 1946 lost a total of 6,637 man-days as a result of 998 injuries. The largest number of injuries and the greatest number of man-days lost were in the police department with the fire department second. In Dallas, Texas, the greatest number of injuries have occurred in garbage collection and in water and sanitary sewer construction. The accident rate is up 25 per cent as compared to last year. Cities usually do not keep cost sheets on time lost because of injuries on the job but the item nevertheless appears in the budget as increased insurance costs, in damaged or idle equipment, as welfare and medical expenses, as wages for labor needed to do the work left undone by injured employees. The indirect cost of accidents generally amounts to four or more times such direct costs as the wage loss to the injured employee, medical expenses, and overhead costs of insurance and/or compensation.

Experience proves that the hazards to workers and to city property can be reduced. The key to the problem is largely in the hands of foremen and supervisors but top management must initiate and direct the over-all safety program. The management safety policy should emphasize education rather than discipline. Blame fixing and disciplinary measures tend to reduce employee participation. Merit ratings for safety and badges or other awards for those with good safety records are far more effective methods of accident prevention than punishment. The suggestions in this report are based on an analysis of the experience of several cities in conducting broad safety programs and on safety practices in industry.

Organization. Control of accidents to municipal employees calls for the same thorough planning that is given to operational projects, the same care in selection of personnel, the same kind of delegation of authority, the same necessary expenditure of funds for equipment and time for training. The size of the city will determine to some extent whether the safety function will be the responsibility of the city engineer or other official, or whether it can be combined with health work and directed through the office of the city's personnel director, or whether there will be a safety committee on which all city departments are represented. At the top there may be an executive safety committee composed of the department heads or assistants selected by them. The committee chairman, selected by the chief administrator of the city, may be the personnel director or someone in the personnel office. This committee recommends policies and regulations to the chief administrator.

In the smaller municipalities a central safety committee may perform many of the functions of a safety director. The manager of the local safety council may act as secretary of the central committee. In the larger cities the official

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or employee in charge of safety needs the help of divisional safety men, appointed with approval of the divisional heads and responsible to those heads. Divisional safety committees may be useful in passing on to the central committee suggestions for the solution of accident problems. The essentials which must be retained in any event are: a responsible, interested executive in charge; a system of records which reveals what the problem is and how well it is being met; and the persistent application of accident prevention principles to all the work done by city employees.

Supervisors also have a definite part to play in the success of any accident prevention program. If supervisors have any mental reservations about the safe practices they are asked to follow, much of the effort spent on the safety program up to that point will have been wasted. Therefore, though the planning of the program may have come from the top, the development and operation of the program must be built on a solid foundation of employee and supervisor acceptance. Many of the soundest accident prevention programs in industry have been built with active participation by the rank and file, who are not only in a position to make the program work, but who are close to the hazards of the job and may know them best.

Content of Safety Programs. Ground work includes a job survey to ascertain the most hazardous occupations. For example, one city had many accidents with city-owned motor equipment. An executive safety committee organized a monthly safety forum for drivers of city-owned equipment. At these meetings a merit board comprised of several equipment drivers, selected by the merit board for the previous month, conducted hearings and fixed responsibility for each accident. The safety committee reviewed the decisions of the merit board and made suggestions to the chief administrator. The monthly meetings were made interesting by showing safety movies and serving refreshments.

This same procedure can be applied to other fields where safety practices can be improved. Among other common hazards are those relating to construction work, garbage and refuse collection, inspectional services, handling of materials, excavation and laying of pipe, and special types of hazards in police and fire services, hospitals, and so on. Accident prevention methods developed by the construction, chemical, and public utilities industries, by insurance underwriters, and by the National Safety Council also can be applied in the municipal field.

To secure employee cooperation the executive safety committee may set up inspection committees composed of foremen and employees who have an intimate knowledge of work processes and who can carry out any recommendations that are made. Such inspections would reveal the need for new equipment or better use of equipment on hand, the need for training employees, and the need for the adoption of safe practices. For some types of municipal work a physical examination at the time of employment and at regular periods thereafter is essential. Industrial employers have found that careful selection and placement of employees greatly reduces the cost of accidents, absenteeism, and occupational disease. Job training instruction is particularly important in times of labor shortage and high labor turnover. Old employees transferred to new work need careful retraining for these jobs. Often both the frequency and severity rate of accidents are highest among old employees who tend to feel that experience in one type of work guarantees immunity against accidents in another.

Contests, awards, and general and special safety meetings of an inspirational or instructive nature help to build an understanding and appreciation of

the safety program. Moving picture films and sound film scripts on fire, industrial safety, motor vehicle hazards, first aid, life saving, and other subjects are available. Posters are a successful means of conveying the safety idea. Technical materials are distributed to foremen, supervisors, and division heads to keep them abreast of approved methods of accident prevention.

Measuring Results. The goal is to reduce the number of injuries to city employees and thus reduce the amount of time lost from work. A good records system is essential and this in turn calls for regulations for the operation of motor vehicles, for the reporting of accidents, for the handling of compensation for injuries and deaths in line of duty, and so on. Provision also should be made for monthly reports to the chief administrator. Useful information generally can be secured from the state workmens' compensation fund or other state agency.

The record and reporting system generally used in industry, and the only one which enables an employer to make accurate comparisons of performance, is the American Standard Method of Compiling Industrial Injury Rates. By establishing experience in both the frequency and severity of injuries in terms of employee exposure, a constant and true picture is obtained. The use and application of this method is discussed in Safe Practices Pamphlet No. 21, available from the National Safety Council, 20 North Wacker Drive, Chicago 6, Illinois.

In some states a reduction in accidents results in lower insurance rates. In California, for example, the city of Berkeley in 1943-44 received a refund of \$28,000 on a premium of \$55,000. San Diego reduced the number of injuries by 33 per cent in one year and got a refund of about \$55,000 from the state; \$20,000 of this saving was the direct result of a safety program. A few years after installing an employee safety program, Milwaukee reduced its annual outlay for compensation payments and medical expenses for accidents from \$90,000 to \$30,000. An indirect but nevertheless important result of an effective accident prevention program is the greater interest and pride that employees take in turning out a good job when they know that management is actively concerned with their safety.

Aids for Developing a Program. The official in charge of the employee safety program should seek aid from the state workmens' compensation insurance fund or other state agency. Two excellent books on the human element involved and techniques for promoting safety are: "Safety Supervision," by V. G. Schaefer (McGraw-Hill Book Company, 330 West 42 Street, New York, 1941, 352pp. \$2.75) and "Industrial Safety," by R. P. Blake (Prentice-Hall, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, 1943). The generally recognized industrial safety requirements are presented in abridged form in "The Handbook of Industrial Safety Standards" (National Conservation Bureau, 60 John Street, New York. Revised 1942. 190pp.). This agency also has published "Safety Supervision in Motor Vehicle Fleets" (1947, 214pp. \$2.25), and the "Commercial Vehicle Drivers' Guide Book" (1947, 40pp.). A complete list of standards pertaining to safety may be secured on request to American Standards Association, 70 East 45th Street, New York 17.

Construction safety requirements of the U.S. Corps of Engineers can be readily adapted by cities; they are set forth in "Safety Requirements" (Safety and Accident Prevention Division, Office of the Chief of Engineers, War Department, Washington, D.C. Revised January 1, 1946, 101pp.). Basic information on industrial accident prevention work is available free to officials from the Division of Labor Standards of the United States Department of Labor in "Safety Subjects" (No. 67, 1944, 152pp.), and in "Safety Through Management Leadership" (No. 15, 1944, 19pp.), in "Joint Safety Committees at Work" (No. 61, 1943, 15pp.),

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in "Occupation Hazards and Diagnostic Signs" (No. 41, 1941, 70pp.), and in other reports (list available on request to the Division).

National Safety Council membership services are widely used by state, county, and municipal governments in the prevention of accidents, particularly in commercial vehicle operations, public utilities work, police and traffic departments, and public transportation systems. These services include an extensive list of technical publications for the engineers in charge of accident prevention, training materials for supervisors, employee training and educational materials. The services include direct membership service in the supplying of such materials, consultation services with the national headquarters staff, library and research work, and assistance in organizing and programming.

Of particular interest to public officials in charge of refuse collection services, public parks, municipal housing, water departments, sewage disposal, public works and others, is the formation of a State, County, and Municipal Safety Committee which will publish a bi-monthly news letter, develop technical and employee training materials peculiarly suited to the departments named, and promote the use of accident reporting methods. The committee is being sponsored by the National Safety Council to enable public officials to take an organized and cooperative part on these special departmental problems. The bi-monthly news letter is available without charge to interested officials. For information and for the news letter write Kent W. Francis, Secretary, State, County, and Municipal Safety Committee, National Safety Council, 20 North Wacker Drive, Chicago 6, Illinois.

Note: Upon request to MIS, subscribing cities may secure a loan copy of typical regulations on the operation of city vehicles and suggested regulations on the reporting of motor vehicle accidents involving city employees and city-owned equipment.